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ABSTRACT

The question addressed refers to the consequences which accrue for sociologists when an accepted historical interpretation is suddenly challenged by rival historians who present either additional data or simply a new interpretation of the existing data. As of 1974, such a controversial situation exists with respect to the history of slavery, and a brief discussion of the extensive debate among historians is addressed in the first part of the essay. Alternatives which the historical evidence of "day-to-day resistance" suggests for sociological theorizing are addressed next. That is, assuming a certain credibility of an anti-Sambo argument, what impact would such an interpretation have on current sociological concepts? In dealing with this question, the main deficiency observed for the sociology of race relations is the failure to account for the phenomenon of separatism or racial nationalism which is well documented by slave historians. A separatist model is formulated because the models of paternalism, assimilation, and colonialism, which are all current in the race relations literature, seems inapplicable to certain aspects of the slave situation in the South. The separatist model is not an appropriate explanatory concept for all of slave behavior, but rather is addressed to a considerable range of slave activities which were ostensibly quite common but have been largely overlooked by sociologists and historians. (Author/AM)id

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SLAVERY, SAMBO, AND SEPARATISM

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The sociology of race relations, as does the rest of sociology, depends considerably upon the work of historians. Race relations theorists often refer to particular historical treatises for substantiation of their theoretical positions. As one historian has indicated (Mullin, 1972), sociologists may even uncritically rely upon the particular historical interpretation that is currently popular.

The question I wish to address in the course of this essay refers to the consequences which accrue for sociologists when an accepted historical interpretation is suddenly challenged by rival historians presenting either additional data or simply a new interpretation of the existing data. As of 1974, such a controversial situation exists with respect to the history of slavery. The writings of Stanley Elkins and Frank Tannenbaum of the 1940's and 1950's were long accepted by many race relations theorists (Mullin, 1972), but with the recent wave of Cliometricians comes an alternative perspective on the subject of slavery. Also, the work of Eugene Genovese, a Marxist historian, represents a quite serious challenge to the theses long advocated by Tannenbaum and Elkins.

Tannenbaum, Elkins, and Sambo.

A primary focal point of the current controversy is Stanley Elkins' "Sambo" thesis. Elkins, adopting the thesis set forth by Frank Tannenbaum that North American slavery was more dehumanizing for the slaves than was South American slavery, argued that only in the Anglo-American form of slavery did the Sambo personality type predominate among slaves. This contention is based largely on evidence from planters' records and from the literature of the period which indicate a general prevalence of the Sambo stereotype. Elkins accepts the basic institutionalist

perspective inherent in Tannenbaum's viewpoint, according to which the nature of slavery is dependent not on economic or demographic contingencies, but rather on the institutional forces of law, religion, and moral tradition. For Tannenbaum, the legal and religious traditions influenced the "climate of moral opinion into which the Negro could fit as a free man" (Genovese, 1968:84). While Elkins accepts this basic thesis, he extends the argument to a concern for the actual intervention into the life of the slave by the priesthood. He posits that in Latin American territories the overwhelming influence and day-to-day intervention by the clerical institution into the lives of plantation slaves was sufficient to maintain the integrity of slaves as humans and, in fact, saved them from regressing to a Sambo personality type. The Sambo personality type was a condition which, Elkins claims, didn't exist among Latin American slaves, who, because of the intervention of priests and state officials, were able to develop mature personalities. The slaves in the Anglo-American world developed the Sambo personality type because of a lack of institutional intervention into the plantation setting, and as a consequence the slaves' only "significant other" or father figure with whom they could identify psychologically was the slaveholder.

Elkins proposes that in addition to the lack of a slave tradition, "equitable" slave law, and appropriate religious concern for slaves in the North American colonies, there were institutional fragmentation, unopposed capitalism, and a philosophy of individualism which all combined to upset that precarious balance among church, state, and slaveholders. As a result, the slaveholders attained "absolute power" over their slaves, since there were no institutional channels for governing their behavior, and the early capitalistic expansion certainly could

not be called into question for the sake of the well-being of mere chattel property. From the vantage point of Freudian psychoanalysis, Sullivan's interpersonal theory, and role theory, Elkins demonstrates that infantilization and the emergence of Sambo were the only possible avenues for personality development given the condition of absolute power wielded by the master class. Consequently, absolute power on the part of the superordinate logically begat absolute dependency by the subordinate.

As opposed to the "closedness" of the American institution of slavery in which "virtually all avenues of recourse for the slave, all lines of communication to society at large, originated and ended with the master" (Elkins, 1959:63), Elkins submits the case of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. For the slaves of the Spanish and Portuguese there were possibilities of manumission, intervention by the church, provision for an official legal protector of slaves, and no irrevocable category of perpetual servitude. Elkins is very much concerned with the treatment of slaves, but he suggests that the slaves in Latin American countries "could, conceivably, have been treated worse than in our own nineteenth century South without altering the comparison, for even in cruelty the relationship was between man and man" (1959:77-78). Again we are reminded of the differences in slave systems as to their recognition of the moral status of slaves or the slaves' essential humanness. For Elkins and Tannenbaum, recognition of the moral status of slaves provided "a fluidity that permitted a transition from slavery to freedom that was smooth, organic, and continuing" (Elkins, 1959:79).

Elkins argues that in all Anglo-American colonies, especially in the United States until 1865, the slaves followed the Sambo stereotype.

Sambo, the typical plantation slave, was docile but irresponsible, loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing; his behavior was full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration. His relationship with his master was one of utter dependence and childlike quality that was the very key to his being (Elkins, 1959:82).

Through the use of Freudian psychology, role theory, and Sullivan's interpersonal theory, Elkins attempts to substantiate his claim that North American slaves exhibited an infantile and docile personality type. He contends that as a result of being uprooted from Africa and transported to the United States, slaves were detached from their prior cultural sanctions which governed their personality and social behavior. Upon being located on a plantation in the South, they were forced to submit to conditions of absolute dependency under an autocratic slaveholder. In summary, Elkins' thesis is that the situation in which the master wields absolute power will result in detachment from prior cultural sanctions for personality and behavior on behalf of the slave and thus the slave will be dependent upon his or her master as a patriarchal figure, significant other, or role model for sanctions governing the development of the slave's personality and behavior.

Elkins finds Anglo-American slavery to be comparable to life for the inmates of German concentration camps during World War II. He contends that these two social settings are nearly identical in that the superordinates in both cases wielded absolute power over masses of subordinates who developed docile, infantile, and submissive personality types.¹ Elkins (1959:87) bases his analogy to the con-

¹I will be concerned with the reactions to Elkins' ideas on the nature of slavery, but there is also a critique of his understanding of life in the concentration camps. Terrence Des Pres offers a critique of both Elkins and Bruno Bettelheim plus an alternative view of life in the concentration camps in a forthcoming book entitled The Survivor.

centration camps on the largely unquestionable assertion that "social behavior is regulated in some way by adjustment to symbols of authority... and that such adjustment is closely related to the very formation of personality. A corollary would be, of course, that the more diverse those symbols of authority may be, the greater is the permissible variety of adjustment to them - and the wider the margin of individuality, consequently in the development of the self."

Sociologists and Sambo.

Elkins' interpretation of slave relations is one which has been widely accepted among sociologists. An historian (Mullin, 1972) has noted the uncritical acceptance of Elkins' Sambo thesis by several sociologists writing on race relations since the publication of Elkins' work in 1959. Mullin contends that Charles Silberman (1964:74-76,80), Thomas F. Pettigrew (1964:13-15), and Pierre L. van den Berghe (1967: 83ff), all unconditionally accept the Sambo thesis. In my own research I have found that Silberman and Pettigrew do in fact accept the thesis that only Anglo-American slavery promoted the Sambo personality and that the institution of slavery, as a "closed" institution, was comparable to the Nazi concentration camps.

I would not posit, however, that van den Berghe uncritically accepts Elkins' position. He theorizes in terms of ideal types which, of course, are not isomorphic with reality but are used as heuristic tools or "measuring rods." While van den Berghe tends toward the view of slavery espoused by Elkins, he doesn't accept such a strictly deterministic model as is characterized by the Sambo thesis in which a master maintains absolute control of absolutely dependent slaves. Van den Berghe does agree with Elkins that slaves often internalized "the feeling of their own social and racial inferiority" and some even "developed feelings of affection and loyalty toward their masters" (1967:83). This contention can not be denied, but again the contradictory or paradoxical instances of day-to-day resistance and conscious accommodation, which will be discussed in detail, are overlooked by van den Berghe as by Elkins.

In examining textbooks on race relations I find that the work of Simpson and Yinger (1965) also reflects an uncritical acceptance of the Sambo thesis. Others (Berry, 1965; Vander Zanden, 1966) do not refer

to the thesis whatsoever; therefore no judgment can be made concerning their position. Alphonso Pinkney's work, Black Americans, likewise does not include a reference to the Sambo thesis, but he does agree with Elkins that slavery was such a "closed" institution that "communication among slaves on the various plantations was impossible" (1969:14). Such an absurdity is resoundingly refuted by evidence of marriage across plantations and celebrations which were attended by slaves of several proximate plantations (Genovese, 1974; Rawick, 1972).

Criticisms of Elkins and Sambo.

In historical circles there has been much criticism of Elkins' thesis and there is substantial evidence which runs contrary to his thesis. I have chosen to examine two prominent issues in this debate which was initiated by Elkins in 1959. These are the issues of "total power" and "day-to-day resistance." First of all, Eugene D. Genovese, in his article "Rebelliousness and Docility in the Negro Slave: A Critique of the Elkins Thesis" (1968:73-101), attacks Elkins' notion of "total power," which is used to characterize the master's control over the slave. For Genovese, "the notion of 'total power' loses force and usefulness and indeed approaches absurdity in a world of probabilities and alternatives" (1968:93). Genovese further suggests that in order to take account of probabilities we would have to start from totally different premises. I disagree with Genovese on that issue, for it is possible to construct probability statements on the basis of Elkins' theory, but the crucial alteration that must be made is that of regarding "total dependency" and "total power" as purely ideal types and in no case as empirical realities. Genovese himself recognizes that this is a fundamental shortcoming of Elkins' thesis and notes that "neither slavery nor slaves can be treated as pure categories" (1968:95).

In a more recent article, Elkins grants to his critics that his thesis concerning absolute power and absolute dependency could be amended such that "something less than absolute power produces something less than total dependency" (1971:350). But he continues to maintain that the tendency on the part of slaves toward absolute dependency is an appropriate characterization of Anglo-American slavery. It is Genovese's contention "that Sambo existed wherever slavery existed, that he nonetheless could turn into a rebel, and that we need to discover the conditions under which the personality pattern could become inverted and a seemingly docile slave could suddenly turn fierce" (1968:74). He feels that there were numerous outward manifestations of a Sambo personality type, but in addition "dangerous and strong currents ran beneath that docility and adjustment" (Genovese, 1968:75). Genovese's use of the principle of contradiction or a dialectical perspective is evident in this instance in which he contends that, rather than there being a single "slavish personality," there were opposing personality tendencies among slaves. The important point to consider from a dialectical perspective is that both personality tendencies were latently present, and either may be elicited pursuant to the appropriate situation.

Secondly, the matter of "day-to-day resistance" or intransigence among Southern slaves is, sociologically, a significant aspect of the historical debate. Elkins himself recognizes that the Sambos of the South were "chronically given to lying and stealing" (1959:82), but he disregards those activities due to their "childlike" character. Furthermore, Elkins emphasizes the extensive "underground" activities of the Latin American slaves which unquestionably overshadow the petty thievery of North American slaves. Although there were few slave revolts in the

United States,¹ other scholars report innumerable instances in which slaves broke plows and hoes, killed farm animals, conducted work stoppages or slowdowns, and even ran away from their plantations (Fredrickson and Lasch, 1971; Genovese, 1974). Scholars generally agree that accommodation or acquiescence to the authority of the master was generally the norm for slave behavior, but the intransigence must not be overlooked. Fredrickson and Lasch propose that "sporadic non-cooperation within a broad framework of accommodation was the natural and inevitable response to plantation slavery" (1971:237-238). These scholars resist the notion that submissiveness is indicative of one's personality and instead argue that accommodation is a strategy which is utilized within the confines of any "total institution" (Goffman, 1961). Thus by replacing the concentration camp analogy with the concept of total institution, Fredrickson and Lasch (1971:229) hope to avoid the view of the slave personality "that does not fit the facts of widespread intransigence, insubordination, and mischiefmaking."

¹In spite of Herbert Aptheker's (1943) claim that there were 250 revolts and conspiracies among southern slaves, I am more inclined to accept the position of Genovese (1974:587) that "the slaves of the Old South, unlike those of the Caribbean and Brazil, did not take up arms often enough or in large enough numbers to forge a revolutionary tradition." While several historians (Aptheker, 1943; Mullin, 1972; Genovese, 1974) have written extensively about slave revolts in the Americas, sociologists (Turner and Killian, 1957; Smelser, 1962; Oberschall, 1972) writing in the area of collective behavior make no references whatsoever to such forms of rebellion. The single sociologist who does treat slave revolts as an instance of a social movement limits that discussion to two pages (Ash, 1972:68-69).

Fredrickson and Lasch argue that "total institutions are distinguished not by the absolute power of the authorities...but by the fact that they are self-contained, so that every detail of life is regulated in accordance with the dominant purpose of the institution" (1971:226). In addition, they prefer to use the concept of total institution because of the flexibility inherent in most total institutions which is not reflected in a concentration camp. Fredrickson and Lasch (1971:232) maintain that "rigid standards of discipline tend to give way before the need to keep things running smoothly without undue effort on the part of the custodians." Citing the case of maximum security prisons, they propose (Fredrickson and Lasch, 1971:232) that there exists a "system of compromises, an uneasy give-and-take which gives prisoners a limited leverage within the system. To the extent that this adjustment limits the power of the guards, a corruption of authority takes place." The application of the total institution concept to slavery is useful and appropriate to the extent that we recognize the strategies employed by slaves so as to limit the authority of the masters. But I would not agree that slavery regulated "every detail of life" for the slaves. The spatial arrangements of the plantation and the special status of some slaves (i.e. mechanics, artisans, city slaves, etc.) mitigated such total regulation.

A Sociological Alternative.

Given this brief discussion of a quite extensive debate among historians, I find it useful to explore the alternatives which the historical evidence of day-to-day resistance suggests for sociological theorizing. That is, assuming a certain credibility of the anti-Elkins argument, what impact would such an interpretation have on current sociological concepts?

The Fredrickson and Lasch argument raises interesting questions concerning the nature of accommodation in any setting. They emphasize the instances of intransigence and rebellious behavior among slaves, but are careful to distinguish those acts from actual revolutionary violence. They contend that noncooperation is "hedonistic rather than political, accommodationist rather than revolutionary" (1971:237). By referring to noncooperation and intransigence as accommodationist and furthermore, by using the concept "strategies of accommodation," the idea of accommodation is expanded so that it encompasses not merely Sambo-like behavior, but also actions which suggest assertive behavior on the part of subordinates. Whereas accommodation previously referred only to submissive, passive, and "cooperative" behavior (Park and Burgess, 1921; Myrdal, 1944; Dollard, 1937), we are now seeing a shift in which mild forms of noncooperative and rebellious behavior are also regarded as accommodationist.¹ I think this shift is highly productive, resulting in a concept which is more isomorphic with the actual instances of accommodative behavior than were previous conceptions of accommodation.

The main reason for considering day-to-day resistance accommodationist rather than rebellious is because rebellions are generally associated with collective resistance instead of individual resistance. There is agreement among most slave historians that there was not a revolutionary tradition among slaves in the South, although there was much intransigency in daily activities. Furthermore, day-to-day resistance can not be regarded as an attempt to subvert the system of slavery, but rather "generally implied accommodation and made no sense except on the assumption of an accepted status quo the norms of

¹Elkins himself acknowledges this sort of accommodation, stating that "the essentially intermediate technique of accommodation could be

which, as perceived or defined by the slaves, had been violated" (Genovese, 1974:598).

The sort of accommodation with which Goffman (1961), Fredrickson and Lasch (1971), and Eugene Genovese (1974) are concerned is what is termed "conscious accommodation," a term coined by Kenneth Stamp (1971). Conscious accommodation allowed the slaves to carve out a greater "living space" by virtue of a decreased need for supervision of them by their masters. That is, the more the slaves exhibited accommodationist behavior, the less was there a need for surveillance and supervision of them by their master. As a consequence of less supervision, the slaves were allowed greater personal freedom within the institution of slavery. As a result of this greater personal freedom, slaves were in a better position to create their own community and to begin the process of articulating a black ethos. Obviously, this notion also has a dialectical or paradoxical "flavor" to it, for if one accommodates, at least outwardly, to the "system" then one gains cultural autonomy and greater freedom in return.

The works of Eugene Genovese (1974) and George Rawick (1972) strongly attest to the existence of a slave culture and a certain degree of racial nationalism. There was not total inclusion into the sociocultural community of the South, nor was there total race or class consciousness, but Genovese asserts that certain blacks functioning as slave drivers, preachers, and artisans contributed to "a proto-national consciousness, expressed primarily through a religious sensibility, that

used as a protective device beneath which a more independent personality might develop" (1959:133). But Elkins insists that this sort of strategic accommodation was possible only later, historically, when there existed "some sort of alternative forces for moral and psychological orientation" (1959:33).

enabled a mass of oppressed individuals to cohere as a people" (1974:659). Rawick proposes that in any situation of oppression religion may very well serve as an opiate, but it also affords the oppressed with "the sustenance necessary for developing a resistance to their own oppression" (Rawick, 1972:33).

The paradoxical nature of religion in the South is quite evident. Organized religion in the South did little to further abolition until late in the era of the "peculiar institution." Many white preachers exhorted plantation slaves to, above all else, be faithful to their master. On the other hand, the few North American slave revolts and conspiracies were often formulated in religious meetings. Nat Turner, an ardent black preacher and former slave, led the most successful slave revolt in this country. Gerald Mullin (1972:160) suggests that "Nat Turner, who charged his plan with supernatural signs, and sacred, poetic language that inspired action, was able to transcend the worlds of the plantation and the city." Mullin emphasizes the use of religion as a mechanism for transcending the cultural differences between city slaves and plantation slaves. Thus we get a glimpse of how the same religious beliefs at the same period of time in the same sociocultural milieu are transformed by the human agents into opposing and contradictory ideologies.

Religion had paradoxical qualities about it on the level of everyday interpersonal relations as well as on the ideological level. The slaves, as other oppressed peoples, employed religion as "a strategy for survival." Genovese cites the example of some North American Indian tribes, as well as African tribes, who retreated from a military defense against the ensuing European colonization to a religious millennial movement. That is, when all else failed, they

turned to the Gods. Genovese observes a similar type of activity among southern slaves. In his words (Genovese, 1972:211):

the retreat from revolutionary violence to politically quietist accommodationism often protected the cultural autonomy of the dissidents and provided a means by which they could resist the domination of their subduers.

The slaves had their own version of postmillennial accommodation, which must be understood as a strategy for survival and not a lapse into passivity.

Thus, the "retreat" to religion was not a total withdrawal, but was instead a means by which the slaves established a "cultural autonomy."

In this instance, we see that the practicing of a religion served as an important mechanism or means by which slaves engaged themselves in the everyday process of carving out "living space" within slavery. In Rawick's words (1972:32):

There is a complex interplay between the ability of any group of men and women to fight against their own oppression and the social "living space" they manage to carve out for themselves both at work and at home.

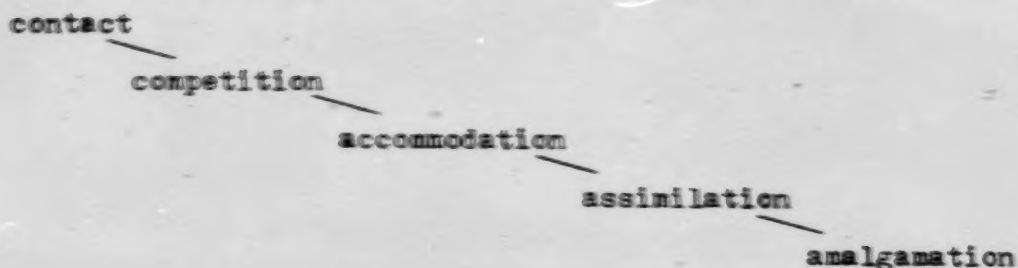
This interplay which Rawick speaks of was centered on the religious sensibilities of the slaves. It was the religious and spiritual realm in which the slaves had the greatest amount of freedom from their masters. In the confines of the slave quarters or a secret meeting place, the slaves came together to receive spiritual as well as communal support. The slaves' folk religion, a mixture of Christianity and the more mystical and magical African religions, was in itself a result of the efforts of the slaves to carve out their living space

I find these general ideas concerning the ability of the oppressed to accommodate to the system and therefore to enrich their amount of "living space" to be quite useful notions for sociologists to consider. As was indicated in the first section of this essay, some sociologists

do adhere to the notion that slavery was a "closed," concentration camp type of system. I think there is much evidence to the contrary, although we must remain within the bounds of that evidence. As Genovese (1968:125) has said, plantation life involved "a compromise between masters and slaves. It was a grossly unfair and one-sided compromise, with the master holding a big edge, but the slaves did not simply lie down and take whatever came."

Referring again to the pioneering essay by Park and Burgess (1921), accommodation has been interpreted as being a particular stage in the progression from the contact between differing groups to the eventual coalescence of those differing cultural configurations. The model of Park and Burgess (1921) is as follows:

Figure 1: Park and Burgess Assimilation Model

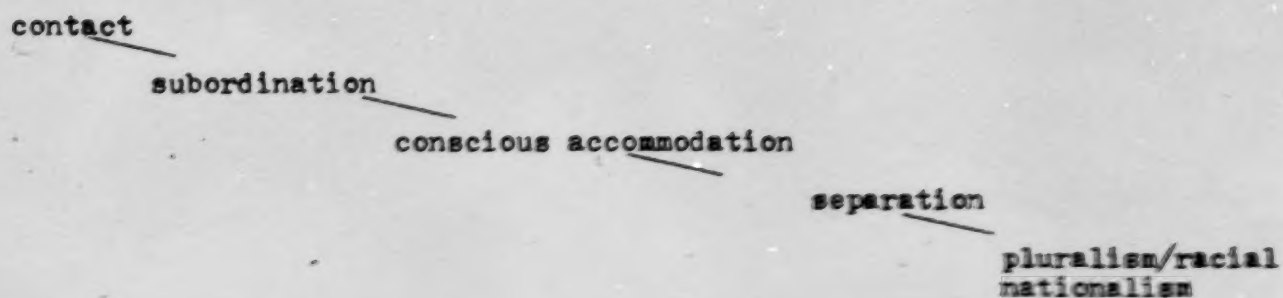


Seen in the context of the entire model, accommodation must necessarily promote integrative and inclusionary behavior between two differing groups of people. Accommodation is essentially the adjustment process that necessarily precedes assimilation. In the case of the United States, immigrants have been forced to adjust or accommodate to the dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethos in order to then assimilate physically, socially, economically, politically, or otherwise into the societal system.

As a result of the research done by slave historians, I think there

is reason to view accommodation as a part of an entirely different cycle which eventually results in racial nationalism or separatism rather than assimilation and cultural amalgamation or homogenization. Although I do not deny the validity of the "assimilation model," I feel there is sufficient evidence of separatism to warrant an investigation into the development of such a phenomenon. I would view the separatist¹ and assimilationist models as complementary of each other rather than as mutually exclusive configurations. Thus, I propose the following "separatist model":

Figure 2: Separatist Model



I have used terms which would be appropriate for any ethnic or racial collectivity which, upon contact with the dominant or host group, is subordinated by means of enslavement, severe discrimination, social exclusion, etc. to the prevailing sociocultural "regime." Conscious strategies of accommodation are resorted to in an effort to regain a bit of "living space." In other words, the subordinates largely accept the status quo but refuse to be totally subservient. They assert themselves to such an extent that the imposition of totalitarian con-

¹I prefer to use the term separatist rather than colonial to avoid confusion with an important distinction which I make elsewhere (Rockett, unpublished master's thesis) between paternalism and colonialism. The colonial model is often contrasted with the assimilation model (Blauner, 1972), but in this instance I am concerned with the subordinates consciously separating themselves, at least culturally, from the super-

ditions of dominance is precluded, but they of course fall short of developing a revolutionary movement. Thus there is sufficient outward accommodative behavior to reduce the need for supervision by the master class and thus to allow the subordinates to separate themselves from the superordinates. The separation may be both physical and cultural, eventually resulting in the development of separatism and racial nationalism. The act of group isolation itself is, I feel, instrumental in the development of any ideology or cultural ethos. George Rayick entitled his book From Sundown to Sunup (1972) which is quite apropos as a designation of that period of the day in which the slaves were together in the quarters and were engaged in the informal, everyday process of constructing an Afro-American ethos.

I propose this model not as a mirror of reality but as an ideal type against which conditions of race relations in any country may be contrasted. I have attempted to pattern the model after the case of blacks in this country, but it is in no respect applicable to all blacks in this country. I think it is an especially appropriate model for those human groups who have experienced slavery of one form or another. Extreme racism and very little miscegenation may also be necessary components of my model, since one would expect a much lower tendency towards racial nationalism in a country such as Brazil in which racial distinctions have been so successfully blurred. The case of the Caribbean island societies, particularly Haiti and Jamaica, present a more extreme deviation from my model since there were relatively strong revolutionary movements among the slaves and freedmen of those regions and thus, there was probably a minimal amount of accommodation.

ordinates. In the case of colonialism, separatism is imposed upon the colonized peoples, rather than emerging as a result of accommodation on the part of the subordinates.

Much work is of course needed in order for us to assess the cross-cultural applicability of the proposed separatist model.

Conclusion.

I must add that I see a need for a separatist model, such as I have formulated, because the models of paternalism, assimilation, and colonialism, which are all current in the race relations literature, seem inapplicable to certain aspects of the slave situation in the South. As was mentioned earlier, the separatist model is not an appropriate explanatory concept for all of slave behavior, but rather is addressed to a considerable range of slave activities which were ostensibly quite common, but have been largely overlooked by sociologists and historians until very recently. One quite astute sociologist, writing on the situation of Mexican Americans in the United States, makes the following statement which I feel quite succinctly describes the situation of the blacks in the ante-bellum South:

If the minority group enters by means of conquest, but is smaller in number than the members of the dominant society and is scattered throughout a large area, then a holding pattern of non-assimilation (no structural assimilation) and non-decolonization (no mobilization to oust the dominant group) may occur in this situation. Partial assimilation may occur, that is, the more eligible members may gradually trickle into an assimilative process; and partial decolonization may occur as well, in other words, a strong cultural nationalism may develop among some of the minority (Murguía, 1975:26).

This is precisely the point I wish to make. There is evidence which supports this interpretation, although we must be cautious about the extent to which such a phenomenon has or did emerge. As Stanley Elkins (1975) points out, there are currently strong tendencies in historical and sociological treatments of the subject to emphasize the

"reaction" of the slaves to the dominant white society, while largely ignoring the "damage" aspects of slavery which were so important for the historians of the past two or three decades. I am obviously strongly influenced by the more recent approach which emphasizes the reaction of slaves to the system, but I would definitely not deny the damaging consequences for the slaves which were integral to the very nature of slavery.

As I have defined the problem at hand, the task was to approach the more recent historical treatises on the subject of slavery and then to see what implications the new historical approach may have for sociology. As I have dealt with the question, the main deficiency of the sociology of race relations is the failure to account for the phenomenon of separatism or racial nationalism, which is well documented by the slave historians. This essay is the product of my efforts to address that gap in the race relations literature.

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